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# Ex-spy tells his story

## Scientist disillusioned by CIA practices

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His story sounded like something out of a spy novel, but Peter James, a former rocket engineer and foreign technology expert, had actually lived through what others only read about.

He himself is a former spy, who became heavily involved with the CIA and Air Force intelligence as he traveled extensively in Europe and South America, attending scientific conferences and meeting frequently with foreign scientists and espionage agents.

"That was before I became aware of the questionable workings of the CIA and the Air Force, the false intelligence reports that both prepared, and the pressure they put on companies who challenged anything they had to say," James explained.

He was at the Fox Valley Technical Institute Monday to give an illustrated lecture about his years as an agent.

The author of two books: "Air Force Mafia" and "Soviet Conquest from Space," is currently touring the United States trying to get people involved "in the workings of their own government, to raise enough questions to make people think," he said.

He himself had gotten involved in the 1960s, unaware, "as most Americans are," of the dark world of spies and undercover agents.

A recent physics graduate of Case Western Reserve University and a rocket engineer with Pratt & Whitney, he was approached by the CIA and asked to help gather information on the Soviet scientists whom he met at conferences.

"I agreed but only as a scientist. At no time did I receive money from the government and I did not sign the secrecy oath," he said. It's because he declined to do the latter that he is able to write books and talk about his ex-



"I think the American system is still the best in the world. Can you imagine what would have happened to me had I tried to do what I did in the Soviet Union?"

Peter James, former spy

periences without having to go through red tape and censorship.

"The main task for me was to try to get pictures and background information about the Soviet scientists I was meeting at scientific conferences," James said. He illustrated his success with slides in which groups of smiling men posed informally in front of famous European landmarks.

"Often I found they were taking my picture, so we had pictures of each other taking pictures," he said, acknowledging that the situation had a spy-versus-spy twist.

Now and then, the Soviet group smiling benignly into the camera included one or two men with sunglasses, despite a cloudy day. "There was little question they knew their picture was being taken, of course, and that it may well end up in CIA files, but the sunglasses make it impossible to get a clean shot of the face," the speaker explained. What helped James in his work was his pretty wife, who obligingly posed for photographs with the scientists, enhancing the picture and mak-

ing it look as if a pleasant afternoon had been spent on a sunny day in Venice, James pointed out.

Another thing that he felt helped was that he had chosen for his "cover" the truth rather than made-up stories about his past.

"If you tell the truth, you can't be caught in any lies. You tell them you are a scientist, for example, and they understand when you answer, 'I'm sorry, but I am not at liberty to tell you that,' when they ask a question that could be dangerous," James said.

And so the scientist and his wife went from conference to conference, cocktail party to cocktail party, picking up pictures and bits of information throughout the world for nine years.

"By the late 1960s, however, I began running across questionable information about our own CIA and Air Force. I was told by my own bosses that the policy at the plant was that anyone who upsets the Air Force would per-

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sonally get escorted out of the door," James said.

He said he started to dig around some more. That came to the attention of the Air Force and he was called in and told to stop. When he refused, his travels were restricted and he was told by the CIA that "there could be troubles with the executive branch" if he persisted.

Those were the years, James pointed out, before the CIA was actually exposed for such things as opening mail, bugging private residences, and keeping close tabs on Martin Luther King.

"I felt my own life was in danger shortly after Daniel Ellsberg released his famous papers about how our own country had lied about what it was doing in other countries," James told the audience.

"All hell broke loose and I learned through various sources that the executive branch had ordered all leaks stopped, no matter what," he said.

James ended up being under total surveillance by the people he had worked with, other American agents.